



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



Public Hearing – March 16, 2009
Environment Committee

Testimony Submitted by Commissioner Gina McCarthy
Department of Environment Protection

**Raised Senate Bill 1078 - AN ACT ESTABLISHING A BI-STATE LONG ISLAND
SOUND COMMISSION**

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony raising our concerns regarding Senate Bill No. 1078, AN ACT ESTABLISHING A BI-STATE LONG ISLAND SOUND COMMISSION. The Department would certainly like to see cooperation and coordination with the State of New York regarding our most precious shared natural resource, Long Island Sound, however we believe the establishment of a new Bi-State Commission is not necessary, and may be duplicative of existing partnerships.

Most significantly, it is unclear what purpose would be served by the proposed Commission that could not be accomplished through existing interstate coordination mechanisms, particularly the Long Island Sound Study (LISS). The LISS is a cooperative bi-state partnership consisting of federal and state agencies, user groups, concerned organizations, and individuals dedicated to restoring and protecting the Sound under the framework of the National Estuary Program. The LISS Management Committee, comprised of environmental officials, scientists, and citizens from Connecticut, New York and the federal government, implements the sound-wide Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan, which focuses on a number of specific goals to improve water quality, habitat, and public involvement and understanding. A number of specialized joint work groups and committees, including a permanent Citizens Advisory Committee, advise and assist with the implementation of the LISS. Suffice it to say that the existing bi-state partnership represented by the LISS enjoys a well-established institutional framework and a solid record of progress in achieving habitat restoration and water quality improvements.

Moreover, we are not aware of any interest in this proposed new Bi-State Commission on the part of New York. Without identical legislation being passed by the State of New York, this bill would become moot — as was the case the last time the Bi-State Committee statutes were amended by PA 05-137, and New York never enacted counterpart legislation.

Thank you for the opportunity to present the DEP's views on this proposal. If you should require any additional information, please contact Robert La France, Legislative Liaison at 424-3401.